

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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R 241838Z MAY 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1539
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 02099

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SO, ET, TZ
SUBJECT: ERITREA: VIEWS OF TANZANIAN PERM REP

1. DURING A MEETING WITH MINISTER-COUNSELOR PETREE AND MISOFF ON MAY 23 TO DISCUSS OTHER MATTERS (SEPTELS), TANZANIAN PERM REP SALIM DISCUSSED HIS VIEWS ON ERITREA AT SOME LENGTH. HE SAID HE BELIEVES THAT A SOLUTION IS STILL POSSIBLE BUT WILL BE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE STRONGLY HELD VIEWS AND STUBBORNESS OF BOTH THE ETHIOPIANS AND THE ERITREANS. ACKNOWLEDGING THE VALIDITY OF SOME ERITREAN CLAIMS, HE NOTED THAT NO MILITARY SOLUTION IS POSSIBLE SINCE THE ONLY MILITARY SOLUTION WOULD BE THE DESTRUCTION OF ERITREA. INDEPENDENCE IS NOT A POSSIBLE SOLUTION EITHER SINCE THE ETHIOPIANS WILL FIGHT TO THE LAST MAN AGAINST ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE.

2. NOTING THAT AT ONE TIME HE FELT THAT ETHIOPIA WAS PREPARED FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION, SALIM SAID HE DID NOT
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THINK THAT IS THE CASE NOW AS THE ETHIOPIANS ARE UNDER THE SPELL OF "THE ARROGANCE OF VICTORY." NEVERTHELESS, SALIM WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT INFORMAL, BEHIND THE SCENES DISCUSSIONS ON ERITREA AT THE UPCOMING KHARTOUM MEETING COULD BE PRODUCTIVE.

3. SALIM SAID HE THOUGHT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAD

DONE "FAIRLY WELL" IN ITS RELATIONS WITH AFRICA, AND THAT IT WOULD BE A "TRAGEDY" IF THE US NOW BEGAN TO VIEW AFRICA THROUGH "EUROPEAN" EYES. AN IDEALOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, HE SAID, OBSCURES THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION.

4. IN RESPONSE TO PETREE'S QUERY ABOUT WHAT WE MIGHT DO TO BE HELPFUL AT KHARTOUM REGARDING ERITREA, SALIM SUGGESTED THAT WE TALK TO THE SAUDIS AND TO EGYPT. THE GOT, HE SAID, HAS TALKED TO ETHIOPIA AND CUBA. CUBA, HE SAID, IS NOT SEEKING A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE ERITREAN PROBLEM. SALIM ADDED, IN EARLIER TALKS WITH EGYPT IT HAD APPEARED THAT THE EGYPTIAN POSITION WAS IDENTICAL TO THAT OF TANZANIA (THAT IS, FAVORING A POLITICAL SOLUTION SHORT OF INDEPENDENCE). COMMENT: IN COMPARISON WITH SALIM'S EVIDENT LACK OF INTEREST IN THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED NON-ALIGNED MEETING IN HAVANA (SEPTTEL), HIS LENGTHY DISCOURSE ON ERITREA REFLECTED BOTH PERSONAL AND EXPLICIT OFFICIAL INTEREST. YOUNG

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